

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**MONDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 2.00PM**

**COUNTY COUNCIL**

**TUESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 10.00AM**

<p><u>Agenda Item</u> <u>No.</u></p> <p><b>5</b></p>
<p><u>See Council</u> <u>Agenda for Item</u> <u>No.</u></p>

**HERTFORDSHIRE YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 -2018**

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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Executive Members:- Teresa Heritage, Children's Services

**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight Herts Youth Justice Performance and key priorities and challenges for 2017-18 and to invite Members to consider whether to approve the Hertfordshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015 -2018, 2017 update.

**2. Summary**

2.1 A Youth Justice Strategic Plan is required under Section 40 the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ("the Act"). Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Strategic Plan ("the Plan") runs from 2015-18 and is refreshed annually. The areas that need to be covered in the Plan are detailed within the Act and the it requires local approval and submission to the Youth Justice Board who are obliged to publish it as directed by the the relevant Secretary of State.. The refreshed Plan is attached as Appendix A to this report.

2.2 Since 2011 National Outcome measures for Youth Justice are:

- Reductions in the number of young people aged 10-17 who are entering the Youth Justice System (YJS) for the first time (First Time Entrants);
- Reduce young people's reoffending; and
- Reduce the number of young people sentenced to custody.

2.3 Alongside this the following key local priorities were identified, which are set out in the Plan:-

- (i) Reduce disproportionality and ensure that outcomes and the experience of BME young people in the Youth Justice system are proportionate and fair
- (ii) Prevent the criminalisation of Looked After children in the Youth Justice system

- (iii) Ensure young offenders are supported to engage in education, training or employment.
- (iv) Prevention and safeguarding of young people at risk of gang involvement and child sexual exploitation
- (v) Youth Justice quality assurance of assessment, planning and interventions for young people in the Youth Justice System
- (vi) Services to victims and restorative justice opportunities
- (vii) Workforce development to ensure effective and quality youth justice service delivery
- (viii) Service development to improve responses to young people affected by domestic abuse.

2.4 Delivery actions to meet National Indicators and local priorities are detailed in the Service Delivery Plan (See Appendix 1 of the Plan) and monitored through management forums.

2.5 In 2016/17 the service maintained its performance in relation to the Youth Justice national outcome measures for reducing First Time Entrants and achieved improvement in preventing young people reoffending and in reducing the use of custody for Hertfordshire young people Youth Justice Bureau (YJB) National Data Summary April 2016 – March 2017).

2.6 The service continues to ensure core statutory Youth Justice delivery to the Courts, young people, families and victims of youth crime. Development areas for the coming year include improved identification and responses to youth offending involving domestic abuse, and responding to serious cross border gang led offending involving young people.

2.7 There are further challenges for Youth Justice performance and service delivery to maintain national and local funding and partner contributions in kind at a time of budgetary constraints and reorganisation for all services, as well as the impact of staff recruitment and retention issues in Targeted Youth Support Services (TYSS) of qualified and experienced staff to undertake Youth Justice work and to manage complex and high risk young people effectively.

2.8 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, full Council is required to approve the Hertfordshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan as part of its policy framework.

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 The Children's Services Cabinet Panel considered a report on this item of business at its meeting on 2 November 2017. The Panel recommended to Cabinet:-

*"That Cabinet recommends to Council that Council approves the Hertfordshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018, 2017 update, attached as Appendix A to the report."*

3.2 Cabinet's recommendation/s to Council will be circulated in the County Council Order of Business.

## 4. Background

- 4.1 The principle aim of the Youth Justice Service is to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people who are under 18 years of age. Section 39 (1) and Section 38 (1, 2) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires that statutory partners, which include the Local Authority, Police, National Probation Service and Health, co-operate to provide multi-agency youth offending services to prevent offending by children and young people.
- 4.2 Overall in 2016/17 there were 2046 offences committed by young people in Hertfordshire resulting in 1035 Court Orders and Youth Conditional Cautions.
- 4.3 There were 314 young people who were First Time Entrants in Hertfordshire between April 2016 and the end of March 2017; this is in line with the last two years where the figure was 316 and 320. Hertfordshire's performance has remained consistent and is better than the national figure. Low levels of First Time Entrants have been achieved since 2009 reflecting the national picture as young people are engaged outside of the formal Youth Justice System wherever possible, through diversion and restorative justice opportunities. Numbers have levelled out and reductions will prove more of a challenge as some young people who have been diverted previously may reoffend more seriously or persistently.
- 4.4 Most recent national reoffending data (Youth Justice Board (YJB) Data Summary April 2016-March 2017) indicates consistent performance for Hertfordshire's young people reoffending after 12 months and better performance than the regional and national rates, although there has been a slight increase in repeat offences and frequency of reoffending, which is also reflected both regionally and nationally. The binary rate for Herts young people reoffending in the cohort measured (July 2014-June 2015) was 32.0% (compared to 35.9 % in the previous year) whilst the regional and national figure were 35.2% and 37.7% respectively.
- 4.5 Reducing young people's reoffending continues to prove a challenge despite greater numbers of young people being diverted away from the criminal justice system for less serious offending. Those young people who do escalate do so invariably with more entrenched offending behaviour, and often have multiple, complex needs. These young people require increased contact levels and specialist input from experienced and trained practitioners to prevent further offending and achieve positive outcomes.
- 4.6 Hertfordshire has achieved consistently low custody rates, although there has been a slight increase in 2016/17 with Hertfordshire performing better than nationally but slightly less well than the region. National data for 2016/17 indicates use of custody rate per 1000 of young people aged 10-17 was 0.27 for Herts compared to 0.37 nationally and 0.20 for the region. Actual numbers of youth custodial sentences imposed in Hertfordshire were 27 in 2016/17, compared to last year's figure of 21, and 31 and 41 in the two years prior to this. Significant reductions in custody rates have been achieved in 2016/17 although percentage improvement remains a challenge year on year, being harder to achieve when overall disposals have reduced.
- 4.7 Performance in relation to ensuring young offenders are engaged in Education, Training and/or Employment has dipped over time and remains a challenge to

achieve and sustain for young people in the Youth Justice System. There is enhanced support from Youth Justice Education Training and Employment practitioners in each of the Targeted Youth Support (TYS) teams; this provision is under review to ensure effectiveness of the resource.

- 4.8 The implementation of the new national Youth Justice assessment framework 'Assetplus' requires further training and quality management oversight across the service in 2017/18 to ensure that it is fully embedded.
- 4.9 Staff retention and the levels of distribution of youth justice expertise across the integrated service remains an ongoing challenge; this was also noted in the Peer Review. Training, monitoring and support are provided by the Central Youth Justice Policy Team to ensure required standards are met.
- 4.10 Further restructure of Services for Young People is on the horizon for 2018 and will require effective change management and leadership to ensure safe and effective practice is maintained.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Police, Probation and Health (CAMHS) each second staff to the multi-agency Targeted Youth Support teams to deliver interventions to young offenders and contribute to the Youth Justice budget together with Children Services and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), to ensure national Youth Justice Indicators and government priorities are met alongside locally identified priorities.
- 5.2 Funding is reviewed annually and is likely to remain a challenge for all agencies in the coming years as services continue to be delivered in a difficult financial climate.

## **6. Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equality implications of the decision that they are making.
- 6.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EQiA) produced by officers.
- 6.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the County Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.4 An EQiA has not been carried out on the Youth Justice Strategic Plan.

Background Information

Crime and Disorder Act 1998 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/contents>

Youth Justice Board National Data Summary April 2016 – March 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/youth-justice-board-for-england-and-wales>

Children's Services Cabinet Panel, 2 November 2017 (**Children's Services Cabinet Panel - 2 November 2017**)